

Payment and your bills

- If you buy extra childcare hours, any bill/invoice you receive should be clear and should **NOT** show the FREE funded hours deducted from the total bill.
- Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) pays your chosen provider directly for the FREE hours you receive.
- You **DO NOT** have to buy additional hours or services such as lunches or uniform to receive the funded hours. However, if you have decided to purchase additional services, these should be clearly shown on your invoice.
- You **DO NOT** have to pay towards any FREE funded hours. Providers are not allowed to charge you for any difference between their own prices and the payments they receive from GCC.

What you can expect from your childcare provider

- Providers **CAN** set which sessions or days are available for free childcare places.
- Providers **CAN** charge a different rate for hours taken in addition to FREE funded hours, but must ensure parents are made aware of this before accepting a place.
- Providers **CANNOT** attach any special conditions on children accessing their free place, e.g. make you take all your funded entitlement with them or insist that you pay for extra sessions or lunches to access your free place.

There is more information available about free childcare entitlement at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/earlyyears

If you have any questions about the funding, you can contact the Family Information Service on **0800 542 02 02** or **01452 427362**

Information for parents receiving free childcare



Every three and four-year-old is entitled to receive 570 hours of free childcare a year, and now, some two-year-olds are also eligible to receive free childcare.

We know that the rules around this free entitlement can be confusing for parents and childcare providers and that parents understandably have lots of questions about how the funding works.

It is really important that you know what you can expect from your childcare provider - whether that's a nursery, playgroup, children's centre or childminder.

This leaflet will provide you with more information about how and when you can access your free childcare and your rights when accessing your free place.

Free childcare for two year olds

This funding is not open to every child. If you meet the criteria and have been awarded the funding, you will receive a letter from Gloucestershire Family Information Service.

The letter will tell you when the funding starts, which is usually the term after your child's second birthday. The funding will last until your child receives the three and four-year-old funding.

Birthday falls between	Term funding starts
1st April - 31st August	September
1st September - 31st December	January
1st January - 31st March	April

Free childcare for three and four-year-olds

Every child is entitled to receive this funding from the term after their third birthday and this will remain in place until the start of their Reception Year at school.

What you need to know about your free childcare

- Each child accessing free childcare is entitled to a total of 570 hours funded education during a year.
- You can take your FREE hours either termly (over 38 weeks) or spread over the full year (50 weeks), if available at your chosen childcare provider.
- Sessions cannot be less than 2.5 hours or more than 10 hours in any one day, but will vary depending on the sessions available from your provider.
- You have the choice to only take the FREE entitlement hours if that is all you want, and this is completely FREE to you.
- Your child can take a packed lunch if you do not wish to purchase a meal from your provider.
- If you attend two childcare settings, e.g. a nursery and a playgroup, you can choose to use your FREE hours at one setting or split the hours between the two.

